

UNUSABLE BLOCK MANAGEMENT WITHIN A NON-VOLATILE MEMORY SYSTEM

ABSTRACT

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Methods and apparatus for tracking defective blocks such that at least some of the defective blocks may be readily identified and tested for usability when desirable are disclosed. According to one aspect of the present invention, a method for identifying spare blocks within a non-volatile memory includes subjecting at least one defective physical block associated with the non-volatile memory to a test that is arranged to
10 determine if the defective physical block is usable. The method also includes determining when the defective physical block passes the test, and identifying the defective physical block as a usable physical block when it is determined that the defective physical block passes the test.